

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for simulating and testing non-soil products in subterranean soil installations, said apparatus comprising:

a container for receiving soil and a non-soil product to be buried therein for simulation and testing;

said container having a base, two opposing sides each having an upper end and a lower end wherein at least one of the two opposing sides is fixed to the base at its lower end, two opposing ends each having an upper end, a lower end, and edges wherein at least one of the opposing ends is not fixed to the base or either of the two opposing sides and is under close fit tolerances along its edges, and wherein the opposing ends and the opposing sides together form a continuous perimeter boundary of a defined size, and a top opening adapted directly or indirectly to receive a load, wherein only the top opening is adapted directly or indirectly to receive a load;

a load means for applying a vertical pressure to soil in the container via the top opening such that the vertical pressure compresses the soil and non-soil product and resolves to form a horizontal pressure;

wherein at least one of said ~~sides~~ ends is configured to move outwardly under said horizontal pressure caused by application of said vertical pressure, wherein the defined size of said continuous perimeter boundary is increased at least as a result of the outward movement of at least one of said ends under said horizontal pressure caused by application of said vertical pressure, so as to simulate larger scale installation conditions and wherein the apparatus is configured to test the effects on the non-soil product, during application of the vertical pressure.

2. (Previously presented) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the container is generally rectangular in plan view, having two spaced apart side walls and two mutually opposing end walls, wherein at least one of said side walls and said end walls are configured to permit outward movement or deformation under the application of said vertical pressure to said soil.

3. (Withdrawn) A soil test apparatus according to claim 2, wherein at least one of said side walls and said end walls is configured for resilient deformation in response to pressure transferred from compacted soil in the container.

4. (Previously presented) A soil test apparatus according to claim 2, wherein at least one of said side walls and said end walls is substantially rigid and configured for outward movement against resilient biasing means in response to pressure transferred from compacted soil in the container.

5. (Previously presented) A soil test apparatus according to claim 4, wherein at least one of said end walls and said side walls are substantially rigid, and wherein at least one of said end walls are configured for resilient deformation or displacement in response to the applied load.

6. (Previously presented) A soil test apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the resilient biasing means includes a leaf spring arrangement secured to a fixed frame forming part of the container.

7. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising at least one viewing window formed in one of the sides of the container.

8. (Original) A soil test the apparatus according to claim 7, wherein at least two of said sides respectively includes one of said viewing windows.

9. (Previously presented) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said sides includes an access port positioned to facilitate access to the product during testing.

10. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said access port is configured to permit remote access to measurement or data recordal apparatus.

11. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising water introduction means to permit selective variation of moisture content in the soil during testing.

12. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising heating means to permit a measure of selective temperature variation in the soil during testing.

13. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising cooling means to permit a measure of selective temperature variation in the soil during testing.

14. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, being adapted for testing pipe sections to simulate subterranean pipeline installations.

15. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the side walls in use extend generally parallel to a longitudinal axis of the pipe section and the end walls extend generally transversely to said longitudinal axis.

16. (Original) A soil test apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the side walls in use extend generally transversely to a longitudinal axis of the pipe section and the end walls extend generally parallel to said longitudinal axis.

17. (Previously presented) A soil test apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a lining member to minimize friction between the soil and the container.

18. (Withdrawn) A method of testing products in subterranean soil installations, said method comprising:

- providing a container for receiving soil and a product to be buried therein for testing, said container having a base, sides and a top opening adapted directly or indirectly to receive a load, wherein at least one of said sides is configured to permit some movement or deformation under application of said load to the soil in the container so as to simulate larger scale installation conditions;

- setting up the apparatus to permit some movement or deformation of at least one of the sides under predetermined load conditions;

- partially filling the container with said soil;

- positioning the product within the container;

- burying the product by the addition of further soil;

- applying said load to the soil via the top opening of the container; and measuring an effect of the load on the product, the container, or the soil.

19. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 18, wherein said measuring step includes measuring or monitoring, either continuously or intermittently, a parameter selected from the group consisting of stress or strain in the product; deformation, deflection, stress or strain in one or more of the sides of the container; compression, movement or pressure in the soil; and visual monitoring of the product.

20. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 18, further comprising lining the container with a lining member, to minimise friction between the soil and the container.

21. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 20, further comprising greasing the lining member.

22. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the base of the container is not configured to move during application of the vertical pressure via the load means.

23. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the apparatus is configured to permit access to the non-soil product during application of the vertical pressure.

24. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the apparatus is sized to accommodate non-soil products for testing therein.

25. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the non-soil product is a building product.

26. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the non-soil product is a pipe.

27. (New) An apparatus for simulating and testing non-soil products in subterranean soil installations, said apparatus comprising:

a container for receiving soil and a non-soil product to be buried therein for simulation and testing;

said container having

a base,

two opposing sides each having an upper end and a lower end wherein at least one of the two opposing sides is fixed to the base at its lower end,

two opposing ends each having an upper end, a lower end, and edges wherein at least one of the opposing ends is not fixed to the base or either of the two opposing sides and is under close fit tolerances along its edges,

and wherein the opposing ends and the opposing sides together form a continuous boundary of a defined size, and

a top opening adapted directly or indirectly to receive a load for applying vertical pressure to soil in the container via the top opening such that the vertical pressure compresses the soil and non-soil product and resolves to form a horizontal pressure, wherein only the top opening is adapted directly or indirectly to receive a load;

wherein at least one of said ends is configured to move outwardly under the horizontal pressure caused by application of the vertical pressure, wherein the continuous boundary is increased at least as a result of the outward movement of at least one of said ends.

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein each of said opposing sides are fixed to the base.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein at least one of the two opposing sides are substantially rigid.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein at least one of the two opposing sides are configured for resilient deformation or displacement in response to the load.

31. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein at least one of the two opposing ends are substantially rigid.

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein at least one of the two opposing ends are configured for resilient deformation or displacement in response to the load.

33. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the two opposing ends are smaller in size as compared to the size of the two opposing sides.